

Introduced by Senator DeSaulnier

February 18, 2011

An act relating to youth services.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 803, as introduced, DeSaulnier. California youth leadership: youth advocacy.

Existing law establishes various programs to advocate for the needs of seniors and other groups, including the Senior Legislature.

This bill would state the intent of the Legislature to amend this bill to enact legislation that would establish the California Youth Leadership Fund and the California Youth Leadership Project to advocate for the needs of youth.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the
2 following:
3 (1) The needs of California's youths can best be assessed by
4 California's youths.
5 (2) There are over 9,000,000 youths under 19 years of age in
6 California, and an additional 3,000,000 more young adults between
7 18 and 24 years of age.
8 (3) All young people need five key developmental resources in
9 order to become productive citizens: caring adults, safe places, a
10 healthy start, an effective education, and opportunities to help
11 others. Young people who receive more of these developmental

1 resources fare better than young people who receive fewer, and
2 those young people are more likely to avoid violence, contribute
3 to their communities, and achieve high grades in school. A
4 significant number of California's youths live disadvantaged lives.
5 Of those youths, an estimated 200,000 minors and thousands more
6 youths 18 to 24 years of age experience homelessness each year.
7 Another 80,000 youths are in the foster care system, over 2,500
8 youths in California currently occupy juvenile justice facilities,
9 and more than 3,000 youths are on parole from those facilities.
10 Youths who are homeless, in the juvenile justice system, or in
11 foster care have limited opportunities to participate in the policy
12 process that ultimately impacts their well-being.

13 (4) There are limited civic engagement opportunities for
14 disconnected and disadvantaged youths, especially opportunities
15 developed and designed for and with them in mind.

16 (5) It is alarming that hundreds of thousands of California's
17 youths are among the two-thirds of America's children and youth
18 recently identified by the America's Promise Alliance as not
19 receiving sufficient developmental resources to safely put them
20 on the path to adulthood. It is also concerning that the high school
21 completion rate is less than 60 percent for low-income students
22 and students of color in California, that gang and youth violence
23 continue to be a concern, and, although birth rates to teen mothers
24 have decreased, that teen pregnancy and parenting continues to be
25 a significant social problem in California. It is encouraging,
26 however, that research indicates that providing more of the five
27 developmental resources for more young people can help prevent
28 many of these problems, and that millions of dollars in later prison,
29 health, and welfare costs can be avoided by providing more
30 developmental resources for more young people now.

31 (6) America's Promise Alliance has called for greater
32 collaboration and integration in working to turn failure into action
33 and improve the lives of young people at risk. More than 20 states
34 have committed their state resources for the creation of statewide
35 entities charged with improving the developmental well-being of
36 their children and youth.

37 (b) It is the intent of the Legislature to amend this act to enact
38 legislation that would establish the California Youth Leadership

- 1 Fund and the California Youth Leadership Project to advocate for
- 2 the needs of youth.

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